

TO: Newport Beach Board of Library Trustees
FROM: Tim Hetherton, Library Services Director
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PREPARED BY: Tim Hetherton
TITLE: Proposed Replacement for Balboa Branch Library

RECOMMENDATION:

In response to a proposed plan to replace the Balboa Branch Library commencing in 2018, Staff recommends the creation of a needs assessment study to acquire an accurate and thorough picture of the Balboa Branch's strengths and weaknesses, in order to improve upon them and meet existing and future challenges.

DISCUSSION:

The Balboa Branch Library is located at 100 East Balboa Blvd. on the Balboa peninsula. The original branch, a 2,200 square foot facility, was constructed in 1929. It was built at a cost of \$7,000 and was constructed around the public restrooms already on the site, making it the oldest public building in the City. In 1952, the Balboa Branch was expanded to 5,000 square feet, with a modern architectural style replacing the original Spanish style exterior. The Library Administration offices were originally housed at the Balboa Branch. The branch was also the original "Fibrary", since it shares a common wall with Fire Station 1.

The placement of the branch geographically reflects the growth of the City, with the peninsula once being the most prominent area of Newport Beach and an appropriate location for the City's first public library. Currently, the branch offers a convenient alternative to residents who would otherwise be required to drive across town to visit Central Library or Mariners. The attached map (ATTACHMENT A) shows the branch in relation to other NBPL locations. The combined radii of the Balboa Branch, Mariners Library, and Central Library provide most residents access to Library services within in 2 miles of their homes.

The branch is open Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Walk in counts, circulation, program and reference statistics are similar to the Corona del Mar branch; i.e. commensurate to the size of the branch's service population. Like CDM, the branch enjoys a strong following and support from the community.

In recent years, the branch has become an aging facility with the normal wear and tear typical of a 63 year old building. In January 2015, Public Works notified the Library Administration that a replacement facility for the Balboa Branch is being planned as a Capital Improvement Project in 2018. While it is somewhat premature to start planning a new facility, the Library Administration and Board of Library Trustees can definitely lay the groundwork for a new branch. Typically, Public Library Administrators and Library Boards use a needs assessment study when planning a new Library facility.

A needs assessment is a process to acquire an accurate and thorough picture of a library's strengths and weaknesses, in order to improve upon them and meet existing and future challenges. A needs assessment of the Balboa Branch Library should include the following components:

- A profile of community demographics;
- A detailed survey querying branch users about what they would like to see in an updated branch;

- Interviews with focus groups (e.g., business community, HOAs, etc.) to gauge the impact of library on the community;
- A summary of the characteristics of the Balboa community that have shaped the consideration of a new library;
- An analysis of the needs for Library Services for a new Balboa Branch Library;
- An analysis of service limitations of the current branch which will be ameliorated by a new facility;
- A summary of the physical limitations of the current library facility;
- A description of services that are needed in the community, but are not now being provided by the current library;
- A draft of an initial building program for review by the community and Board;
- Start a public relations plan.

Other important issues to consider include:

- As a good neighbor, we want to share the space with Fire Station 1 to ensure that the fire station meets modern standards and codes and has the ability to keep the community safe;
- Identify ways to meet the needs of both the year round residents and the renters who visit the peninsula in the summer months;
- Create a home for our local history collections, given the historical nature of the branch;
- Prepare for a 2020 reopening and 100th Anniversary celebration, commemorating the fact that a City Ordinance established a free public library and a Board of Library Trustees in 1920.

NOTICING:

This agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the Board of Library Trustees considers the item).

ATTACHMENT A: Newport Beach Public Library locations map